

Draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Barrow-in-Furness in Cumbria

Further electoral review

November 2006

Translations and other formats

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What is the Boundary Committee for England?

The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, an independent body set up by Parliament under the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000. It is responsible for conducting reviews as directed by the Electoral Commission or the Secretary of State.

Members of the Committee are:

Pamela Gordon (Chair)
Robin Gray
Joan Jones CBE
Ann M. Kelly
Professor Colin Mellors

Director:

Archie Gall

When conducting reviews our aim is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor in an area is as nearly as possible the same, taking into account local circumstances. We can recommend changes to ward boundaries, the number of councillors and ward names. We can also recommend changes to the electoral arrangements of parish councils.

Executive summary

The Boundary Committee for England is the body responsible for conducting electoral reviews of local authorities. A further electoral review of Barrow-in-Furness is being undertaken to provide improved levels of electoral equality across the borough. It aims to ensure that the number of voters represented by each borough councillor is approximately the same. The Electoral Commission directed the Boundary Committee for England to undertake this review on 12 May 2005.

Current electoral arrangements

Under the existing arrangements, six wards currently have electoral variances of more than 10% from the borough average with one ward varying by more than 30% of the borough average. During the previous review, the electorate forecast provided by the Borough Council for the five-year period 1996 and 2001, was not realised, particularly in Barrow Island ward which has resulted in it having a poor variance, with 35% fewer electors than the borough average.

This review will be conducted in four stages:

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	6 September 2005	Submission of proposals to us
Two	13 December 2005	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	21 November 2006	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	27 February 2007	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

Submissions received

We received 11 representations during Stage One, including borough-wide schemes from the Borough Council and the Conservative Group both of whose recommendations were based on a council size of 36. The other nine representations opposed the Council's and the Conservative Group's proposal to combine Barrow Island with other parts of the town. Respondents provided evidence of community identity to oppose the Borough Council's and the Conservative Group's proposed Old Barrow ward.

Analysis and draft recommendations

Electorate figures

The Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2009, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 1% from 49,787 to 50,087 over the five-year period from 2004 to 2009. We did not receive any comments in relation to those electorate figures and are satisfied that they are the most accurate that can be provided at this time.

Council size

We received two identical proposals in relation to council size, from the Borough Council and the Conservative Group. During Stage One, we requested further information from the Council regarding its proposed council size and it provided some further evidence. Whilst the evidence was not extensive, we consider it sufficient to justify a decrease of two members.

General analysis

We are proposing 11 three-member wards, one two-member ward and one single-member ward. Our proposed Barrow Island ward would be a single-member ward on the same boundaries as the existing Barrow Island ward, with 22% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2009. We acknowledge this poor level of electoral equality but consider the evidence of community identity received in relation to this area justifies retaining the existing Barrow Island ward. In the remaining wards of the borough, we have broadly adopted the proposals of the Council. With the exception of our proposed Barrow Island ward, we are satisfied that our proposed wards will have good levels of electoral equality throughout the borough.

What happens next?

There will now be a consultation period, during which we encourage comment on our draft recommendations on the future electoral arrangements for Barrow-in-Furness contained in the report. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.** We believe that the more feedback we receive, based on clear evidence, the better informed we will be in forming our final recommendations. We will take into account all submissions received by 26 February 2007. Any received **after** this date may not be taken into account.

We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Barrow-in-Furness and welcome comments from interested parties. In particular, we found our decisions regarding Barrow Island to be a difficult judgement between our statutory criteria. We would particularly welcome local views, backed up by demonstrable evidence, during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

Express your views by writing directly to us:

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The full report is available to download at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Table 1: Draft recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
1	Barrow Island	1	The existing Barrow Island ward (unchanged)
2	Central	2	Part of the existing Central ward; part of the existing Hindpool ward
3	Dalton North	3	Part of the existing Dalton North ward (Lindal & Marton parish; Askam & Ireleth parish; the proposed of Dowdales parish ward of Dalton Town with Newton parish)
4	Dalton South	3	The existing Dalton South ward and part of the existing Dalton North ward (the existing Anty Cross and Newton parish ward and the proposed Beckside parish ward of Dalton Town with Newton Parish)
5	Hawcoat	3	The existing Hawcoat ward (unchanged)
6	Hindpool	3	Part of the existing Hindpool ward; part of the existing Central ward
7	Newbarns	3	Part of the existing Newbarns ward; part of the existing Parkside ward; part of the existing Roosecote ward
8	Ormsgill	3	The existing Ormsgill ward; part of the existing Parkside ward
9	Parkside	3	Part of the existing Parkside ward; part of the existing Risedale ward
10	Risedale	3	Part of the existing Risedale ward; part of the existing Roosecote ward; part of the existing Newbarns ward
11	Roosecote	3	Part of the existing Roosecote ward

Table 1 (continued): Draft recommendations: Summary

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Constituent areas
12	Walney North	3	The existing Walney North Ward (unchanged)
13	Walney South	3	The existing Walney South Ward (unchanged)

Notes:

1. The borough comprises three parishes. The remainder of the borough is unparished.
2. The maps accompanying this report illustrate the proposed wards outlined above.
3. We have made a number of minor boundary amendments to ensure that existing ward boundaries adhere to ground detail. These changes do not affect any electors.

Table 2: Draft recommendations for Barrow-in-Furness borough

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Barrow Island	1	1,700	1,700	23	1,700	1,700	22
2	Central	2	2,540	1,270	-8	2,602	1,301	-6
3	Dalton North	3	4,642	1,547	12	4,616	1,539	11
4	Dalton South	3	4,524	1,508	9	4,573	1,524	10
5	Hawcoat	3	4,239	1,413	2	4,199	1,400	1
6	Hindpool	3	4,009	1,336	-3	4,207	1,402	1
7	Newbarns	3	3,839	1,280	-7	4,013	1,338	-4
8	Ormsgill	3	4,003	1,334	-4	3,962	1,321	-5
9	Parkside	3	4,007	1,336	-3	3,968	1,323	-5
10	Risedale	3	4,317	1,439	4	4,277	1,426	2
11	Roosecote	3	3,694	1,231	-11	3,778	1,259	-9

Table 2 (continued): Draft recommendations for Barrow-in-Furness borough

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12 Walney North	3	4,133	1,378	0	4,092	1,364	-2
13 Walney South	3	4,140	1,380	0	4,100	1,367	-2
Totals	36	49,787	-	-	50,087	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,383	-	-	1,391	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each ward varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

1 Introduction

1 This report contains our draft proposals for the electoral arrangements for the borough of Barrow-in-Furness, on which we are now consulting.

2 At its meeting on 12 February 2004 the Electoral Commission agreed that the Boundary Committee should make on-going assessments of electoral variances in all local authorities where the five-year forecast period following a periodic electoral review (PER) has elapsed. More specifically, it was agreed that there should be closer scrutiny where either:

- 30% of wards in an authority had electoral variances of over 10% from the average, or
- any single ward had a variance of more than 30% from the average

3 The intention of such scrutiny was to establish the reasons behind the continuing imbalances, to consider likely future trends, and to assess what action, if any, was appropriate to rectify the situation.

4 Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council's last review was carried out by the Local Government Commission for England (LGCE), which reported to the Secretary of State in November 1997. An electoral change Order implementing the new electoral arrangements was made on 16 October 1998 and the first elections on the new arrangements took place in May 1999.

5 In carrying out our work, the Boundary Committee has to work within a statutory framework.¹ This refers to the need to:

- reflect the identities and interests of local communities
- secure effective and convenient local government
- achieve equality of representation

In addition we are required to work within Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972.

6 Details of the legislation under which the review of Barrow-in-Furness is being conducted are set out in a document entitled *Guidance and procedural advice for periodic electoral reviews* (published by the Electoral Commission in July 2002). This *Guidance* sets out the approach to the review and will be helpful in both understanding the approach taken by the Boundary Committee for England and in informing comments interested groups and individuals may wish to make about our recommendations.

7 Our task is to make recommendations to the Electoral Commission on the number of councillors who should serve on a council, and the number, boundaries and names of wards. We can also propose changes to the electoral arrangements for any parish councils in the borough. We cannot consider changes to the external boundaries of either the borough or of parish areas as part of this review.

¹ As set out in section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended by SI 2001 No. 3962)

8 The broad objective of an electoral review is to achieve, as far as possible, equal representation across the borough as a whole, i.e. that all councillors in the local authority represent similar numbers of electors. Schemes which would result in, or retain, an electoral imbalance of over 10% in any ward will have to be fully justified. Any imbalances of 20% or more should only arise in the most exceptional circumstances, and will require the strongest justification.

9 Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a 'vote of equal weight' when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. Accordingly, the objective of an electoral review is to ensure that the number of electors represented by each councillor is, as near as is possible, the same across a district. In practice, each councillor cannot represent exactly the same number of electors given geographic and other constraints, including the make up and distribution of communities. However, our aim in any review is to recommend wards that are as close to the district average as possible in terms of the number of electors per councillor, while also taking account of evidence in relation to community identity and effective and convenient local government.

10 We are not prescriptive about council size and acknowledge that there are valid reasons for variations between local authorities. However, we believe that any proposals relating to council size, whether these are for an increase, a reduction, or the retention of the existing size, should be supported by strong evidence and arguments. Indeed, we believe that consideration of the appropriate council size is the starting point for our reviews and whatever size of council is proposed to us should be developed and argued in the context of the authority's internal political management structures, put in place following the Local Government Act 2000. It should also reflect the changing role of councillors in the new structure.

11 As indicated in its *Guidance*, the Electoral Commission requires the decision on council size to be based on an overall view about what is right for the particular authority and not just by addressing any imbalances in small areas of the authority by simply adding or removing councillors from these areas. While we will consider ways of achieving the correct allocation of councillors between, say, a number of towns in an authority or between rural and urban areas, our starting point must always be that the recommended council size reflects the authority's optimum political management arrangements and best provides for convenient and effective local government and that there is evidence for this.

12 In addition, we do not accept that an increase or decrease in the electorate of the authority should automatically result in a consequent increase or decrease in the number of councillors. Similarly, we do not accept that changes should be made to the size of a council simply to make it more consistent with the size of neighbouring or similarly sized authorities; the circumstances of one authority may be very different from that of another. We will seek to ensure that our recommended council size recognises all the factors and achieves a good allocation of councillors across the district.

13 Where multi-member wards are proposed, we believe that the number of councillors to be returned from each ward should not exceed three, other than in very exceptional circumstances. Numbers in excess of three could result in an

unacceptable dilution of accountability to the electorate and we have not, to date, prescribed any wards with more than three councillors.

14 The review is in four stages (see Table 3, below).

Table 3: Stages of the review

Stage	Stage starts	Description
One	6 September 2005	Submission of proposals to us
Two	13 December 2005	Our analysis and deliberation
Three	21 November 2006	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation on them
Four	27 February 2007	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations

15 Stage One began on 6 September 2006, when we wrote to Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council inviting proposals for future electoral arrangements. We also notified Cumbria Police Authority, the Local Government Association, Cumbria Local Councils' Association, parish councils in the borough, Members of Parliament with constituency interests in the borough, Members of the European Parliament for the North West Region and the headquarters of the main political parties. We placed a notice in the local press, issued a press release and invited Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council to publicise the review further. The closing date for receipt of representations, the end of Stage One, was 12 December 2005.

16 During Stage Two we considered all the submissions received during Stage One and prepared our draft recommendations.

17 We are currently at Stage Three. This stage, which began on 21 November 2006 and will end on 26 February 2007, involves publishing the draft proposals in this report and public consultation about them. **We take this consultation very seriously and it is therefore important that all those interested in the review should let us have their views and evidence, whether or not they agree with these draft proposals.**

18 During Stage Four we will reconsider the draft recommendations in the light of the Stage Three consultation, decide whether to modify them, and submit final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. It will then be for the Commission to accept, modify or reject our final recommendations. If the Commission accepts the recommendations, with or without modification, it will make an electoral changes Order. The Commission will determine when any changes come into effect.

Equal opportunities

19 In preparing this report the Boundary Committee has had regard to the general duty set out in section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 and the statutory Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality (Commission for Racial Equality, May 2002), i.e. to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful racial discrimination

- promote equality of opportunity
- promote good relations between people of different racial groups

National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Broads

20 The Boundary Committee has also had regard to:

- Section 11A(2) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as inserted by section 62 of the Environment Act 1995). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in a National Park, any relevant authority shall have regard to the Park's purposes. If there is a conflict between those purposes, a relevant authority shall attach greater weight to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park.
- Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in an AONB, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purpose of the AONB.
- Section 17A of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act (as inserted by section 97 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000). This states that, in exercising or performing any functions in relation to, or so as to affect, land in the Broads, a relevant authority shall have regard to the purposes of the Broads.

2 Current electoral arrangements

21 The borough of Barrow-in-Furness comprises the parishes of Askam & Ireleth, Lindal & Marton and Dalton with Newton Town. The rest of the borough is unparished. The electorate of the borough is geographically separated between the rural settlements of Dalton, Walney and the town including Barrow Island. The area of Barrow Island in particular has experienced a reduction in its electorate. Due to a decline in ship building in the Barrow Island area, this ward in particular has experienced a reduction in its electorate.

22 The electorate of the borough is 49,787 (December 2004). The Council presently has 38 members who are elected from 13 wards. There are currently 12 three-member wards and one two-member ward. The borough average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the borough by the total number of councillors representing them on the council. At present, each councillor represents a borough average of 1,310 electors (49,787 divided by 38), which the Borough Council forecasts will increase to 1,318 by the year 2009 if the present number of councillors is maintained (50,087, the 2009 forecast electorate, divided by 38).

23 During the last review of Barrow-in-Furness the Borough Council forecast there would be an increase in the electorate of approximately 1% between 1996 and 2001. However, electorate growth since that time has resulted in a significant amount of electoral inequality between wards with an overall decrease in the electorate across the borough. To compare levels of electoral inequality between wards, we calculated the extent to which the number of electors per councillor in each ward varies from the borough average in percentage terms.

24 Data from the December 2004 electoral register showed that, under these arrangements, electoral equality across the borough met the criteria that the Electoral Commission agreed would warrant further investigation. The number of electors per councillor in six of the 13 wards (46%) varies by more than 10% from the borough average with one ward, Barrow Island, varying by more than 30% from the borough average. The worst imbalance is in Barrow Island ward where the councillor represents 35% fewer electors than the borough average. Having noted that this level of electoral inequality is unlikely to improve, the Electoral Commission directed the Boundary Committee to undertake a review of the electoral arrangements of Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council on 12 May 2005.

Table 4: Existing electoral arrangements for Barrow-in-Furness borough

	Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
1	Barrow Island	2	1,700	850	-35	1,700	850	-36
2	Central	3	3,242	1,081	-18	3,304	1,101	-16
3	Dalton North	3	4,748	1,583	21	4,722	1,574	19
4	Dalton South	3	4,418	1,473	12	4,467	1,489	13
5	Hawcoat	3	4,239	1,413	8	4,199	1,400	6
6	Hindpool	3	3,307	1,102	-16	3,505	1,168	-11
7	Newbarns	3	4,156	1,385	6	4,311	1,437	9
8	Ormsgill	3	3,866	1,289	-2	3,827	1,276	-3
9	Parkside	3	3,869	1,290	-2	3,831	1,277	-3
10	Risedale	3	3,601	1,200	-8	3,565	1,188	-10
11	Roosecote	3	4,368	1,456	11	4,464	1,488	13

Table 4 (continued): Existing electoral arrangements for Barrow-in-Furness borough

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2004)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2009)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12 Walney North	3	4,133	1,378	5	4,092	1,364	3
13 Walney South	3	4,140	1,380	5	4,100	1,367	4
Totals	38	49,787	-	-	50,087	-	-
Averages	-	-	1,310	-	-	1,318	-

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each ward varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

3 Submissions received

25 At the start of the review members of the public and other interested parties were invited to write to us giving their views on the future electoral arrangements for Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council and its constituent parish councils.

26 During this initial stage of the review, officers from the Committee visited the area and met with officers and members from the Borough Council. We are grateful to all concerned for their co-operation and assistance. We received 11 representations during Stage One, including a borough-wide scheme from the Borough Council and the Conservative Group, all of which may be inspected at both our offices and those of the Borough Council. Representations may also be viewed on our website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk.

Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council

27 The Borough Council proposed a council of 36 members, two fewer than at present, serving 12 wards, compared to the existing 38.

28 The Borough Council proposed a borough-wide scheme that broadly reflected the existing arrangements with modifications that would improve electoral equality. The Borough Council did not provide evidence of community identity in support of any of its warding arrangements. The Borough Council proposed creating an Old Barrow ward comprising the existing Barrow Island, part of the existing Hindpool ward and part of the existing Central ward.

Political groups

29 The Conservative Group on the Borough Council proposed a borough-wide scheme based on the Borough Council's proposal. The Conservative Group's proposal was similar to the proposal made by the Borough Council and would also provide a good level of electoral equality.

Member of Parliament

30 We received one representation from John Hutton, MP for Barrow and Furness. Mr Hutton raised the Council's proposed name change of the Barrow Island ward; Ramsden, and stated that his constituents 'wish to retain the name of Barrow Island in any new ward that is created'.

Other representations

31 A further eight representations were received from local residents, councillors other interested parties. Councillors Tongue and Wood (Barrow Island), Mr Green, Barrow Island Community Primary School, Bram Longstaffe Children's Centre and Barrow Island Community Centre all provided evidence of community identity within the existing Barrow Island ward and opposed the Old Barrow ward proposed by the Council and the Conservative Group.

32 Mr Randall and Mrs Carruthers opposed the Council's initial name for its proposed Old Barrow ward; Ramsden. Mrs Carruthers provided a petition of

approximately 350 signatories opposing this proposed ward name. Mr Randall and Mrs Carruthers also provided evidence of community identity within the existing Barrow Island ward.

4 Analysis and draft recommendations

33 Before finalising our recommendations on the electoral arrangements for Barrow-in-Furness we invite views on our initial thoughts as expressed in these draft recommendations. We welcome comments from all those interested relating to the number of councillors, proposed ward boundaries, ward names, and parish council electoral arrangements. In particular, we would welcome comments in relation to our proposed Barrow Island ward. We found our decisions regarding Barrow Island to be a difficult judgement to make between the statutory criteria. This was due to the level of electoral equality that retaining the ward's boundaries would result in and the fact that we received strong support to retain the ward from residents and other respondents in Barrow Island. We would welcome alternative proposals backed up by demonstrable evidence, particularly in relation to Barrow Island, during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

34 As described earlier, the prime aim in considering the most appropriate electoral arrangements for Barrow-in-Furness is to achieve electoral equality. In doing so we have regard to section 13(5) of the Local Government Act 1992 (as amended), with the need to:

- secure effective and convenient local government
- reflect the identities and interests of local communities
- secure the matters in respect of equality of representation referred to in paragraph 3(2)(a) of Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972

35 Schedule 11 to the Local Government Act 1972 refers to the number of electors per councillor being 'as nearly as may be, the same in every ward of the district or borough'. In relation to Schedule 11, our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on existing electorate figures, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of local government electors likely to take place over the next five years. We must also have regard to the desirability of fixing clearly identifiable boundaries and to maintaining local ties.

36 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral equality is unlikely to be attainable. There must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach, in the context of the statutory criteria, is to keep variances to a minimum.

37 If electoral imbalances are to be minimised, the aim of electoral equality should be the starting point in any review. We therefore strongly recommend that, in formulating electoral schemes, local authorities and other interested parties should make electoral equality their starting point, and then make adjustments to reflect relevant factors such as community identity and interests. Five-year forecasts of changes in electorate should also be taken into account and we aim to recommend a scheme which provides improved electoral equality over this period.

38 The recommendations do not affect county, district or parish external boundaries, local taxes, or result in changes to postcodes. Nor is there any evidence that these recommendations will have an adverse effect on house prices, or car and house insurance premiums. Our proposals do not take account of parliamentary boundaries, and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

Electorate figures

39 As part of the previous review of Barrow-in-Furness borough, the Borough Council forecast an increase in the electorate of 1% between 1996 and 2001. Between the last electoral review of Barrow-in-Furness in 1997 and the start of this review, the electorate has actually decreased by 9%. However, the Borough Council has stated that this is due to a cleansing of its electoral register. As part of this review the Borough Council submitted electorate forecasts for the year 2009, projecting an increase in the electorate of approximately 1% from 49,787 to 50,087 over the five-year period from 2004 to 2009.

40 We did not receive any representations in relation to the electorate figures that the Borough Council provided during Stage One from any other respondents.

41 We recognise that forecasting electorate figures is difficult and, having considered the Borough Council's figures, accept that they are the best estimates that can reasonably be made at this time. We consider the council has considered all planning applications in the borough and are satisfied that the electorate figures it has provided reflect the growth anticipated.

Council size

42 Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council presently has 38 members. The Borough Council proposed a council size of 36 members. The Borough Council's proposal was made in the context of its internal political management structure. It stated that the proposed reduction was 'made against the requirements of the political management arrangements currently in place'. The Council went on to comment that these requirements included 'the division of membership between the Executive and Planning Committees, i.e. no member of the Executive Committee may be a Member of the Planning Committee and vice versa.' However, it provided little information of the requirement for division of committee membership.

43 The Borough Council said that its Executive Committee structure was established to 'enable councillors to have more time to devote to duties within their wards'. However, the Council went on to state that 'there does not appear to be evidence available locally to indicate a demonstrable increase in that workload'.

44 We did not consider this information to be sufficient to justify a reduction to 36 and subsequently requested further information from the Borough Council on their proposal.

45 In its further evidence the Council said that due to a reduced frequency of meetings and overall workload, a council size of 38 was no longer necessary and therefore justified a reduction. The Borough Council provided evidence of this and stated that with effect from 2005/06, its three scrutiny committees would meet every other month rather than every month as previous arrangements. 'Therefore there has been a considerable reduction in the workload of the scrutiny committees'.

46 With the exception of the Conservative Group, we did not receive any other representations in relation to council size. The Conservative Group supported the Borough Council's proposed council size but did not provide any additional evidence or reasons in support of the reduction.

47 Whilst the Borough Council has not provided extensive evidence in support of its proposed council size of 36, we consider it to demonstrate a clear reduction in councillor workload and to justify a decrease of two members.

48 We therefore propose a reduction to the existing council size from 38 to 36. We are satisfied that a reduced council size will provide effective and convenient local government in the context of the Borough Council's internal political management structure and the representational role of councillors. However, we welcome further evidence from interested parties on council size during Stage Three.

Electoral equality

49 Electoral equality, in the sense of each elector in a local authority having a vote of equal weight when it comes to the election of councillors, is a fundamental democratic principle. The Electoral Commission expects the Boundary Committee's recommendations to provide for high levels of electoral equality, with variances normally well below 10%. Therefore, when making recommendations we will not simply aim for electoral variances of under 10%. Where inadequate justification is provided for specific ward proposals we will look to improve electoral equality seeking to ensure that each councillor represents as close to the same number of electors as is possible, providing this can be achieved without compromising the reflection of the identities and interests of local communities and securing effective and convenient local government. We take the view that any proposals that would result in, or retain, electoral imbalances of over 10% from the average in any ward will have to be fully justified, and evidence provided which would justify such imbalances in terms of community identity or effective and convenient local government. We will rarely recommend wards with electoral variances of 20% or more, and any such variances proposed by local interested parties will require the strongest justification in terms of the other two statutory criteria.

50 The borough average is calculated by dividing the total electorate of the borough (49,787 in 2004 and 50,087 in 2009) by the total number of councillors representing them on the council, 36 under our draft proposals. Therefore, the average number of electors per councillor under our draft recommendations is 1,383 in 2004 and 1,391 in 2009.

51 Overall, we are satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral equality under our draft recommendations for Barrow-in-Furness. However, initially three wards, Barrow Island, Dalton North and Roosecote, will have variances of greater than 10%. This is forecast to improve by 2009 in two wards, Roosecote and Dalton North. In the case of Barrow Island ward, we consider we have received sufficient community identity evidence to justify a single-member ward which will have 22% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2009. Whilst the Boundary Committee would not normally be inclined to put forward warding arrangements with such high variances, we consider the strength and quality of the community evidence received in relation to this area justifies this level of electoral inequality.

52 In the case of Dalton, we are confident that our warding arrangements in the Dalton area are the best that can reasonably be achieved. Dalton is a rural settlement in the north-east of the borough, which is geographically separate from the town of Barrow-in-Furness. In considering our warding arrangements in Dalton, we sought to reflect this and avoid combining Dalton with other areas of the borough. We are therefore proposing a boundary between Dalton North and Dalton South

wards that would divide the area of Dalton and achieve the best possible electoral equality in the area without combining parts of Dalton with other areas of the borough.

General analysis

53 Having proposed a reduction in council size to 36, we have developed proposals which are broadly based on those of the Borough Council and the Conservative Group.

54 The proposals of the Borough Council and the Conservative group were similar. The Council and the Conservative Group submitted identical proposals for warding arrangements in Walney North, Walney South, Old Barrow, Dalton North, Dalton South and Hindpool wards. Their proposals in Ormsgill, Parkside, Risedale, Hawcoat, Newbarns and Roosecote wards differed slightly. Little evidence was provided by either the Council or the Conservative Group in support of their respective proposals.

55 In the rural areas of Walney and Dalton we decided to adopt the proposals of the Borough Council and the Conservative Group while in the town area we made a number of modifications. Whilst the Council and the Conservative Group provided little evidence in support of their schemes, we acknowledge that they would both achieve good levels of electoral equality throughout the borough. We also note that the Council's proposal has been locally consulted on with the three parish councils in Dalton and that was their consultation document was made available for public inspection at Barrow Town Hall. A public notice drawing attention to the document was also published in the local newspaper. The absence of community identity evidence from the Council and the Conservative Group has caused us some difficulties when considering alternative ward boundaries, particularly in relation to Roosecote and Risedale wards. Where we have modified the Council's and the Conservative Group's proposals we have sought to provide for a stronger boundary. However, in light of the evidence of community identity received in relation to Barrow Island during Stage One, we recommend retaining the existing Barrow Island ward but with one councillor instead of the two it currently has.

56 We did not receive any evidence of community identity in the other areas of the borough. We have therefore proposed wards that provide good levels of electoral equality. We propose to adopt the Council's and the Conservative Group's proposed wards of Walney North, Walney South, Dalton North, Dalton South and Hindpool.

57 Our proposal for Central ward is based on the constituent parts of the Council's and the Conservative Group's proposed Old Barrow ward, minus the island. In our proposed Newbarns, Parkside, Hawcoat and Ormsgill wards, we have adopted the proposals of the Borough Council. In these wards we consider the Council has proposed stronger boundaries than those proposed by the Conservative Group, whilst achieving good electoral equality.

58 Our proposals are a combination of single-, two- and three-member wards. We are proposing 11 three-member wards and in Barrow Island ward and Central ward we propose a single-member and a two member ward respectively. This is a slight deviation from the Borough Council's and the Conservative Group's proposed scheme of 12 three-member wards.

59 During Stage Three we welcome further comments on our draft recommendations, in particularly in relation to our warding arrangements where we did not receive representations other than those made by the Council and the Conservative Group, including the town and the settlements of Dalton and Walney. We are also particularly keen to receive comments in relation to Barrow Island where we faced difficulty recommending a scheme that would reflect community identity and secure a good level of electoral equality.

Warding arrangements

60 For borough warding purposes, the following areas, based on existing wards, are considered in turn:

- Walney North, Walney South, Dalton North and Dalton South wards (page 27)
- Ormsgill, Hawcoat, Parkside, Newbarns, Risedale, Roosecote and Hindpool wards (page 29)
- Central and Barrow Island wards (page 31)

61 Details of our draft recommendations are set out in Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 11, respectively), and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Walney North, Walney South, Dalton North and Dalton South wards

62 Under the existing arrangements Walney North and Walney South wards are unparished. The existing Dalton North ward comprises Askam & Ireleth parish, Lindal & Marton parish and Dowdales parish ward of Dalton Town with Newton parish. The existing Dalton South ward comprises Beckside parish ward and Anty Cross and Newton parish wards of Dalton Town with Newton parish. Table 4 (page 18) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements were to remain in place.

63 During Stage One we only received proposals from the Borough Council and the Conservative Group in relation to Walney North, Walney South, Dalton North and Dalton South wards.

64 Both the Borough Council and the Conservative Group proposed retaining the existing arrangements in Walney North and Walney South wards and proposed making a slight modification to the boundary between Dalton North and Dalton South wards to improve the existing level of electoral equality. The modification proposed by both the Council and the Conservative Group was identified.

65 The proposed warding arrangements reflected Walney and Dalton being geographically separate from the rest of the borough. The area of Walney is a rural settlement separated from the town by the Walney Channel which runs along the eastern ward boundaries of Walney North and Walney South. The Borough Council's and the Conservative Group's proposed ward boundaries of Walney North and Walney South retain the existing ward boundaries. Both wards would have electoral equality of 2% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2009.

66 Similarly, the area of Dalton is a rural settlement to the north-east of Barrow-in-Furness. The Council and the Conservative Group proposed a modification to the ward boundary between Dalton North and Dalton South. This would transfer electors from Dowdales parish ward of Dalton North ward to Beckside parish ward of Dalton South ward, along part of Broughton Road.

67 The settlement of Dalton is geographically separate from the rest of the borough. We were therefore keen to avoid combining this area with other areas of the borough. The Dalton area is entitled to six councillors but will still have slightly more electors per councillor than the borough average if the external boundary to this area is retained. Dalton North and Dalton South would have 11% and 11% more electors respectively by 2009. We acknowledge that this is not particularly good electoral equality but it is nonetheless the best achievable given the geography of the area.

68 Having considered the representations received, we propose to adopt the Council's and the Conservative Group's proposals for Walney and recommend retaining the existing ward boundaries for Walney North and Walney South wards. Under our proposed council size of 36, both Walney North and Walney South wards would be represented by three members and have 2% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2009.

69 We explored options to achieve a better level of electoral equality than the Council's and the Conservative Group's proposed wards in Dalton. We considered transferring electors from the existing Dalton South ward to the proposed Roosecote ward. However, we did not deem any areas of Dalton South ward as obvious to transfer to the Roosecote ward. Transferring approximately 400 electors from the Dalton area would improve the level of electoral equality in the area. However, Roosecote and Dalton South wards have open land between them and are geographically distinct, making a transfer of electors from Dalton South ward difficult. We therefore do not consider the electoral inequality to be sufficiently serious as to justify pursuing this option at this stage.

70 In Dalton North and Dalton South wards we are adopting the Borough Council's and the Conservative Group's proposals, which are based on the existing wards with a modification which improves electoral equality. Whilst these warding arrangements do not provide particularly good electoral equality, with 11% and 10% more electors per councillor respectively than the borough average by 2009, they do achieve the best possible levels of electoral equality if the area's geographic separateness from the rest of the borough is to be respected. However, we welcome further views in relation to our proposals in this area during Stage Three.

71 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 11, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Walney North, Walney South, Dalton North and Dalton South wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Maps 1, 2 and 4 accompanying this report.

Ormsgill, Hawcoat, Parkside, Newbarns, Risedale, Roosecote and Hindpool wards

72 Under the existing arrangements Ormsgill, Hawcoat, Parkside, Newbarns, Risedale, Roosecote and Hindpool wards are currently unparished. Table 4 (on page 18) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

73 During Stage One we received proposals from the Borough Council and the Conservative Group in relation to Ormsgill, Hawcoat, Parkside, Newbarns, Risedale, Roosecote and Hindpool wards. We did not receive further representations in relation to these areas from any other respondents.

74 The Borough Council and the Conservative Group proposed slight modifications to the existing ward boundaries which would improve the overall electoral equality in the area.

75 The Borough Council proposed modifications to the existing wards with the exception of the existing Hawcoat ward which it proposed to retain. The Council's proposals would provide the wards in these areas with good levels of electoral equality. Ormsgill, Hawcoat, Parkside, Newbarns, Risedale, Roosecote and Hindpool wards would have 5% fewer, 1% more, 5% fewer, 4% fewer, 6% fewer, 1% fewer and 1% more electors per councillor respectively than the borough average by 2009.

76 The Council's proposed Hindpool ward would retain the western boundary of the ward against the Walney Channel. The proposed boundary between the proposed Hindpool and the Council's proposed Old Barrow ward follows part of Greengate Street, part of Duke Street, part of Abbey Road and part of North Road. Similarly, the proposed Ormsgill ward also retains its western boundary against the Walney Channel. Its south eastern boundary would include Derbyshire Road (north and east side), Lichfield Close and Sandringham Close.

77 The Council's proposed Parkside ward was based on the existing boundaries with slight modifications to include Greengate Street and Lorne Road in the south of the ward and follows part of Oxford Street behind Victoria Infant School. Its eastern boundary would transfer part of Hollow Lane to Newbarns ward. The Council's proposed Roosecote ward would transfer part of the existing ward, north of Riverside Gardens, to the proposed Newbarns ward and the area south of Riverside Gardens, running along Roose Road, to the proposed Risedale ward. The Council's proposed Newbarns ward was based on the existing ward boundaries which follow Abbey Road in the north west of the ward, the railway on the eastern boundary and Lesh Lane and Bridgegate Avenue in the south east of the ward. Its proposed Risedale ward was based on the existing ward boundaries which follow Bridgegate Avenue, Greengate Street, Friars Lane and the railway line on the southern boundary, taking in the area further east of Friar Lane from the existing Roosecote and Newbarns wards.

78 The Conservative Group's proposals in these areas differed slightly from those of the Council, with the exception of Hindpool ward where the proposals were identical. The Conservative Group's proposals would also provide the wards in these areas with good levels of electoral equality. Ormsgill, Hawcoat, Parkside, Newbarns,

Risedale, Roosecote and Hindpool wards would have 6% fewer, 4% fewer, 3% fewer, 1% more, 4% fewer, 3% fewer and 1% more electors per councillor respectively than the borough average by 2009.

79 In its proposed Ormsgill ward, the Conservative Group proposed that the existing ward should also include Derbyshire Road (north and east side), Devonshire Road and Ainslie Street, from the existing Parkside ward. The existing Ormsgill ward boundary follows the Walney Channel, west of the Sowerby Woods Business Park, Harrogate Street and east of Devonshire Road around Thorncliffe School, Victoria Junior School and Victoria Infant School. In addition, the Conservative Group's proposed Parkside ward would include Thorncliffe Road, Thorncliffe Park, Grantley Road, Furness Park Road and Hawcoat Lane of the existing Hawcoat ward as well as the existing Parkside ward. The existing Parkside ward boundary follows Harrogate Street, Hibbert Road, Lorne Road, part of Greengate Street, Lesh Lane and Hollow Lane.

80 The Conservative Group's proposed Roosecote ward would retain the existing boundaries which follow the Mean High Water, most of the railway, the southern boundary of Dalton South ward and the eastern district boundary. However, it proposed transferring Broadway, Gateway, Longway, Roose Road, Thrums Street and Westway to the its proposed Risedale ward. It largely proposed Newbarns ward be retained but Abbey Road and the area west of Abbey Approach would be transferred to its proposed Hawcoat ward.

81 The Conservative Group's proposals varied only slightly to the proposals of the Borough Council and would achieve similar good levels of electoral equality in every instance.

82 We consider the Council's proposed boundary between Hawcoat and Newbarns wards which follows Abbey Road, to be a stronger boundary than that proposed by the Conservative Group, which includes the area west of Abbey Approach. We note that whilst neither the Council nor the Conservative Group have provided evidence to support their respective proposals, the Council's proposal has been locally consulted on and in light of this proposed boundary being geographically stronger with the use of the main road, we are adopting this as part our draft recommendations.

83 We are also adopting the Council's proposed boundary between Parkside and Risedale wards. We consider the Conservative Group's proposal to have merit. However, in the absence of supporting evidence, we have decided to adopt the Council's proposal, which uses Greengate Street as a strong geographic boundary and has also been consulted on locally. As a consequence, we have also adopted the Council's proposals in Ormsgill, Parkside, Hawcoat and Newbarns wards.

84 We propose to adopt the Council's proposed Risedale ward with a modification in the east. We are adopting its eastern boundary, which follows Greengate Street, but have made a modification to its proposed boundary between Risedale and Roosecote wards. We propose using the railway line, as we consider this provides a stronger boundary between the two wards. This will provide Roosecote and Risedale wards with 9% fewer and 2% more electors per councillor than the borough average respectively by 2009.

85 We acknowledge that the electoral equality of Roosecote ward could be improved under alternative warding arrangements. However, we consider the variance of 9% fewer electors per councillor by 2009 is better than breaching such a strong physical boundary as the railway line.

86 The Council's proposals in Ormsgill, Parkside, Hawcoat and Newbarns wards, which we are adopting, will have 5% fewer, 5% fewer, 1% more and 4% fewer electors per councillor respectively than the borough average by 2009. We also propose to adopt the Hindpool ward as proposed by both the Council and the Conservative Group. This ward will have 1% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2009. In Roosecote and Risedale wards, our proposals which are based on the Council's proposed wards with modifications, will have 9% fewer and 2% more electors per councillor respectively than the borough average by 2009.

87 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 11, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Ormsgill, Hawcoat, Parkside, Newbarns, Risedale, Roosecote and Hindpool wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 3 accompanying this report.

Central and Barrow Island wards

88 Under the existing arrangements Central and Barrow Island wards are currently unparished. Table 4 (on page 18) outlines the existing electoral variances for 2004 and also the variances which the wards are forecast to have by 2009 if the existing arrangements remained in place.

89 During Stage One we received 11 representations in relation to the existing Barrow Island ward. The Borough Council and the Conservative Group proposed identical warding arrangements in this area. They proposed that part of the existing Central ward be incorporated in a new Old Barrow ward including the existing Barrow Island ward and part of the existing Hindpool ward. The proposed northern boundary between the proposed Hindpool ward and the proposed Old Barrow ward would follow part of Greengate Street, part of Duke Street, part of Abbey Road and part of North Road.

90 We acknowledge that this proposed ward would achieve an excellent level of electoral equality in this area of the borough. We also note that road links exist between the island and the other areas of the borough. Nonetheless, in reaching conclusions on electoral arrangements, we are required to take account of community identities and interests as well as achieving good electoral equality. We have therefore taken into consideration the evidence of community identity, as provided in the eight representations received from local Barrow Island respondents, when forming our draft recommendations in this area. We also note that the Borough Council and the Conservative Group did not provide evidence any of community identity to support their proposed Old Barrow ward.

91 The eight local respondents referred to above, opposed the Borough Council's and the Conservative Group's proposed Old Barrow ward. Respondents stated that there is no shared community identity between the existing Barrow Island ward and the other constituent parts of the proposed Old Barrow ward. They considered that the existing Barrow Island ward should be retained. This ward would have 22% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2009 if it were represented by

one member. In some cases respondents acknowledged the poor electoral equality of the existing Barrow Island ward but nonetheless maintained that the Borough Council's and the Conservative Group's proposal did not consider community identity. A petition was also received opposing the ward name of Ramsden, originally proposed by the Council in their consultation. The petition stated the signatories strongly objected 'to the proposal to change the name of Barrow Island to Ramsden ward'. The signatories went on to say 'this is a move that would take away our identity of which we are very proud'. The petition was signed by approximately 350 residents of Barrow Island ward.

92 We received one representation from John Hutton, MP for Barrow and Furness. Mr Hutton raised the proposed name change of the Barrow Island ward and stated that his constituents 'wish to retain the name of Barrow Island in any new ward that is created'.

93 Respondents cited a strong evidence of community identity within the existing Barrow Island ward which was not deemed to extend to the existing Central and Hindpool wards, which the Borough Council and the Conservative Group proposed would make up the constituent parts of the proposed Old Barrow ward.

94 In opposing the Borough Council's and the Conservative Group's proposed Old Barrow ward, Councillors Tongue and Wood (Barrow Island ward) argued that 'Barrow Island is a unique community with easily recognised boundaries and has community issues that are distinct from other wards in the borough. Barrow Island has separate needs and enjoys a somewhat autonomous existence, having its own churches (2), a community Primary School with breakfast and after school provision, a crèche and a nationally renown Nursery School'.

95 Mr Green, a local resident, argued that 'the best people to represent Barrow Island are Barrow Islanders. This being the case it seems that the best solution to a falling number of residents would be to reduce the number of councillors on Barrow Island from two to one'.

96 Respondents provided strong evidence of community identity vis-à-vis the working relationship between the port and the local residents, the community centre, an annual gala day organised and run by the residents, raising money for local needs and a local police office sharing facilities with the community. Respondents stated that the Crown Green Bowling green in Barrow Island was funded and driven by the community and the Barrow Island Community Centre is managed by a committee of Barrow Island residents, providing a youth and community project for the island. Respondents also submitted evidence of Barrow Island's rugby and football teams, the island fishing club and the local amenities, including a library, chemist and Post Office, that all cater for the residents of Barrow Island.

97 Having carefully considered all the evidence of community identity provided by respondents, we propose retaining the boundaries of the existing Barrow Island ward, reducing its representation from two members to one. We acknowledge that respondents have provided strong and persuasive evidence of community identity. We note that this ward will have 22% more electors per councillor than the borough average by 2009. Generally, the Boundary Committee would not be inclined to adopt a ward which would have such a high level of electoral inequality. However, we consider this to be an exceptional case which justifies us moving away from

seeking an optimum level of electoral equality. Respondents provided us with tangible evidence of community identity, including local amenities and community provisions, that support the retention of the existing Barrow Island ward.

98 We acknowledge that the Council's and the Conservative Group's proposed Old Barrow ward addressed the poor electoral equality of the existing Barrow Island ward and would achieve a good level of electoral equality. However, we believe that, exceptionally in this case, the balance of evidence points towards the need to reflect the identity and interests of the Barrow Island community.

99 We therefore propose to retain the boundaries of the existing Barrow Island ward with a reduction from the current representation of two members to one.

100 We propose to create a two-member Central ward comprising the remaining non-island constituent parts of the Borough Council's and the Conservative Group's proposed Old Barrow ward. This ward will have 6% fewer electors per councillor than the borough average by 2009.

101 We propose to name this ward Central as the existing Central ward is the predominant constituent part of our proposed ward. However, we welcome proposals for any more representative ward name during Stage Three.

102 During Stage Three we also welcome further views in relation to this area including comments in relation to our proposed warding arrangements for Barrow Island and Central wards.

103 Tables 1 and 2 (on pages 9 and 11, respectively) provide details of the constituent parts and electoral variances of our draft recommendations for Barrow Island and Central wards. Our draft recommendations are shown on Map 1 and Map 3 accompanying this report.

Conclusions

104 Table 5 shows how our draft recommendations will affect electoral equality, comparing them with the current arrangements (based on 2004 electorate figures) and with forecast electorates for the year 2009.

Table 5: Comparison of current and recommended electoral arrangements

	Current arrangements		Draft recommendations	
	2004	2009	2004	2009
Number of councillors	38	38	36	36
Number of wards	13	13	13	13
Average number of electors per councillor	1,310	1,318	1,383	1,391
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	6	6	3	2
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	2	1	1	1

105 As shown in Table 5, our draft recommendations for Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council would result in a reduction in the number of wards with an electoral variance of more than 10% from six to three. By 2009 only two wards are forecast to have an electoral variance of more than 10%. We propose to decrease council size from 38 to 36 members. We acknowledge that our proposed Barrow Island ward will not have a good level of electoral equality. However, we consider this is justified in light of the community evidence received in relation to retaining Barrow Island ward. During Stage Three we invite respondents to let us have their views on our draft recommendations, including whether or not they agree with these proposals.

Draft recommendation
 Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council should comprise 36 councillors serving 13 wards, as detailed and named in Tables 1 and 2, and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

Parish electoral arrangements

106 As part of an FER the Committee can make recommendations for new electoral arrangements for parishes. Where there is no impact on the borough council's electoral arrangements, the Committee will generally be content to put forward for consideration proposals from parish councils for changes to parish electoral arrangements in FERs. However, the Boundary Committee will usually wish to see a degree of consensus between the borough council and the parish council concerned. Proposals should be supported by evidence, illustrating why changes to parish electoral arrangements are required. The Boundary Committee cannot recommend changes to the external boundaries of parishes as part of an FER.

107 Responsibility for reviewing and implementing changes to the electoral arrangements of existing parishes, outside of an electoral review conducted by the Boundary Committee, lies with borough councils.² If a borough council wishes to make an Order amending the electoral arrangements of a parish that has been subject to an electoral arrangements Order made by either the Secretary of State or the Electoral Commission within the past five years, the consent of the Commission is required.

108 When reviewing electoral arrangements, we are required to comply as far as possible with the rules set out in Schedule 11 to the 1972 Act. The Schedule provides that if a parish is to be divided between different borough wards it must also be divided into parish wards, so that each parish ward lies wholly within a single ward of the borough. Accordingly, we propose consequential parish warding arrangements for the parish of Dalton Town with Newton to reflect the proposed borough wards of Dalton North and Dalton South.

109 The parish of Dalton Town with Newton is currently served by 10 councillors representing three wards: Dowdales parish ward, Beckside parish ward and Anty Cross and Newton parish ward.

Draft recommendations

Dalton Town with Newton Parish Council should comprise 10 councillors, as at present, representing three wards: Dowdales parish ward (returning three councillors), Beckside parish ward (returning three councillors) and Anty Cross and Newton parish ward (returning four councillors). The parish ward boundaries should reflect the proposed borough ward boundaries in the area, as illustrated and named on Maps 1 and 3.

² Such reviews must be conducted in accordance with section 17 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.

5 What happens next?

110 There will now be a consultation period of 14 weeks, during which everyone is invited to comment on the draft recommendations on future electoral arrangements for Barrow-in-Furness contained in this report. We will take into account fully all submissions received by 26 February 2007. Any received after this date may not be taken into account.

111 We have not finalised our conclusions on the electoral arrangements for Barrow-in-Furness and welcome comments from interested parties relating to the proposed ward boundaries, number of councillors, ward names, and parish council electoral arrangements. In particular, we found our decisions regarding our proposed Barrow Island ward to be a difficult judgement between the statutory criteria. This was due to the resultant variance of this ward in light of the strong evidence of community identity received during Stage One. We welcome alternative proposals backed up by demonstrable evidence, particularly in relation to Barrow Island, during Stage Three. We will consider all the evidence submitted to us during the consultation period before preparing our final recommendations.

112 Express your views by writing directly to:

**Review Manager
Barrow-in-Furness Review
The Boundary Committee for England
Trevelyan House
Great Peter Street
London SW1P 2HW**

reviews@boundarycommittee.org.uk

Submissions can also be made online at
www.boundarycommittee.org.uk/our-work/ferfeedback.cfm.

113 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, the Committee now makes available for public inspection full copies of all representations it takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all Stage Three representations will be placed on deposit locally at the offices of Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council, at the Committee's offices in Trevelyan House and on its website at www.boundarycommittee.org.uk. A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

114 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with our draft recommendations. We will then submit our final recommendations to the Electoral Commission. After the publication of our final recommendations, all further correspondence should be sent to the Electoral Commission, which cannot make the electoral change Order giving effect to our recommendations until six weeks after it receives them.

6 Mapping

Draft recommendations for Barrow-in-Furness

115 The following maps illustrate our proposed ward boundaries for Barrow-in-Furness borough:

- **Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Barrow-in-Furness Borough, including constituent parishes.
- **Sheet 2, Map 2** illustrates the proposed wards in Walney and Dalton.
- **Sheet 3, Map 3** illustrates the proposed wards in Barrow.
- **Sheet 4, Map 4** illustrates the proposed wards in Walney South and Roosecote.

Appendix A

Glossary and abbreviations

AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	A landscape whose distinctive character and natural beauty are so outstanding that it is in the nation's interest to safeguard it
Boundary Committee	The Boundary Committee for England is a committee of the Electoral Commission, responsible for undertaking electoral reviews
Constituent areas	The geographical areas that make up any one ward, expressed in parishes or existing wards, or parts of either
Consultation	An opportunity for interested parties to comment and make proposals at key stages during the review
Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve a council
Order (or electoral change Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Electoral Commission	An independent body that was set up by the UK Parliament. Its mission is to foster public confidence and participation by promoting integrity, involvement and effectiveness in the democratic process
Electoral equality	A measure of ensuring that every person's vote is of equal worth

Electoral imbalance	Where there is a large difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the borough
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in local government elections
FER (or further electoral review)	A further review of the electoral arrangements of a local authority following significant shifts in the electorate since the last periodic electoral review conducted between 1996 and 2004
Multi-member ward	A ward represented by more than one councillor and usually not more than three councillors
National Park	<p>The 12 National Parks in England and Wales were designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 and will soon be joined by the new designation of the South Downs. The definition of a National Park is:</p> <p>‘An extensive area of beautiful and relatively wild country in which, for the nation's benefit and by appropriate national decision and action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the characteristic landscape beauty is strictly preserved; – access and facilities for open-air enjoyment are amply provided; – wildlife and buildings and places of architectural and historic interest are suitably protected; – established farming use is effectively maintained’
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors

Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward than the average the electors can be described as being over-represented
Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single borough enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by residents of the parish who are on the electoral register, which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries
Parish electoral arrangements	The total number of parish councillors; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
PER (or periodic electoral review)	A review of the electoral arrangements of all local authorities in England, undertaken periodically. The last programme of PERs was undertaken between 1996 and 2004 by the Boundary Committee for England and its predecessor, the now-defunct Local Government Commission for England

Political management arrangements	The Local Government Act 2000 enabled local authorities to modernise their decision making process. Councils could choose from three broad categories; a directly elected mayor and cabinet, a cabinet with a leader, or a directly elected mayor and council manager. Whichever of the categories it adopted became the new political management structure for the council
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward than the average the electors can be described as being under-represented
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward varies in percentage terms from the borough average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the borough council

Appendix B

Code of practice on written consultation

The Cabinet Office's November 2000 *Code of Practice on Written Consultation* (available at www.cabinet-office.gov.uk/regulation/Consultation/Code.htm) requires all government departments and agencies to adhere to certain criteria, set out below, on the conduct of public consultations. Public bodies, such as the Boundary Committee for England, are encouraged to follow the Code.

The Code of Practice applies to consultation documents published after 1 January 2001, which should reproduce the criteria, give explanations of any departures, and confirm that the criteria have otherwise been followed.

Table B1: The Boundary Committee for England's compliance with Code criteria

Criteria	Compliance/departure
Timing of consultation should be built into the planning process for a policy (including legislation) or service from the start, so that it has the best prospect of improving the proposals concerned, and so that sufficient time is left for it at each stage.	We comply with this requirement.
It should be clear who is being consulted, about what questions, in what timescale and for what purpose.	We comply with this requirement.
A consultation document should be as simple and concise as possible. It should include a summary, in two pages at most, of the main questions it seeks views on. It should make it as easy as possible for readers to respond, make contact or complain.	We comply with this requirement.
Documents should be made widely available, with the fullest use of electronic means (though not to the exclusion of others), and effectively drawn to the attention of all interested groups and individuals.	We comply with this requirement.
Sufficient time should be allowed for considered responses from all groups with an interest. Twelve weeks should be the standard minimum period for a consultation.	We comply with this requirement.
Responses should be carefully and open-mindedly analysed, and the results made widely available, with an account of the views expressed, and reasons for decisions finally taken.	We comply with this requirement.
Departments should monitor and evaluate consultations, designating a consultation coordinator who will ensure the lessons are disseminated.	We comply with this requirement.